1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

and then bring me the profits whether or not they had crops growing and whether or not they had labor to carry on the cultivation. If I asked them what would happen to their farm they showed little concern and said merely that they farm because they can do nothing else. The implication is that if they had anything better to do they would stop farming immediately.

Land for agriculture is not scarce in Bornu and all settlements except the capital city have plenty of free or unused land within their boundaries. Adjacent to a Kanuri village or hamlet are the farm plots of long-term members of the settlement and their descendants who have inherited these "house-farms" as they are called in Kanuri because they represent land attached to households. These plots are always bounded and often fertilized by the village sheep and goats. In Magumeri house-farms extend in a circle around the village for a radius of about three quarters of a mile. Outside this circle are isolated farm plots dotted here and there and free land as well as pasture land. Ownership is obtained by clearing such land after having registered this intent with the village head, by inheriting a plot, or by having been given it by the previous owner. The Kanuri see house-farm land as symbolizing long-term and stable association with a village or city, while bush farms, although everyone has a few such plots, mean transience or newness because the household head who farms only these does not yet have any farm plots identified with his compound so that people can say, "There is Modu's house, his house-farms are in such-and-such a spot." Instead they say, "That is Modu, he has moved into so-and-so's house or built a house near so-and-so, and has cleared a few new farm plots a mile or two to the south of town."

An interesting and yet difficult question is that of land ownership. The way in which land is owned can be seen in those practices associated with acquisition and transfer. Anyone can clear new land or land that has been unclaimed for many years. He should report this to his local political leader whose permission is always granted if there are no known claims on the property. Again a man may go to the local political leader and ask where he can farm; he is then directed to available plots on the advice of the leader. Or land may be inherited, usually in the male line, or acquired as a gift from a friend, or it can even be sold. Political leaders sometimes try to exert themselves in being party to all land transfers so that their permission becomes part of the transaction, and they feel they have a legitimate right to do so when the previous owner has used the land for a short period. The difficulty here is that there is no definite rule to tell the Kanuri how long a man should use a piece of land during his own lifetime before he has a total right to transfer it to anyone else. On the other hand, they believe that once land has been inherited it is the property of the family, and decisions about its use and transfer are primarily in the hands of the owners. In practice the Kanuri always hold land because they are using it, having cleared it, inherited it, or come to some agreement over it with the previous owner. In the latter case this could mean anything from an outright sale, practiced more near the larger cities, to an agreement over it with the user who gives the previous owner some percentage of the crop. The system works well when household heads as land owners and users have good working relations with their local political leaders. If this is not the case, then political leaders often insist on helping to make decisions about the land and its ultimate transfer whether it has been held for a short time or a much longer one. I have seen or

161 has been declining in the present century. The Kanuri Empire
[175] had suffered final defeat at the hands of Rabeh's invading forces in 1890, and the countryside had been ravaged in the
[164] succeeding decade. Venereal disease appears to have spread
[842] widely throughout the population leaving in its wake a marked decline in fertility and a resultant decrease in numbers of
• 311 the Kanuri population. There is consequently little pressure
[137] for land to farm. Large stretches of brush country are unworked, and the denser sections, along old water-courses, are
136 veritable jungles of brush and thorn. Larger wild-life have long since disappeared from Bornu, forced out by many centuries of human occupation, but some of the denser section of thicket might well support them today. A small herd of elephants is reported around Gumsa, in Geidam District, and of course elephants can be found in the extensive marshes along Lake Chad, but by and large the only game one sees are gazelle, monkeys, and birds, including occasional ostriches.

361 The Kanuri are a sedentary, agricultural people, who live in villages and towns. The fields which they farm encircle their villages. They are never found living in dispersed home-
369 steads. A basic division exists between Kanuri village life and Kanuri life in the towns and cities. This division corresponds to the classic distinctions between folk and urban polar extremes. Urban life was present in pre-contact Kanuri culture
[162] and consequently is well integrated into Kanuri culture. In fact, the Kanuri cities of the eighteenth century were unques-

128 erally which was discussed in the previous chapter. At times,
[125] quantitative data will be presented on a sample of 44 individuals, representing various selected social categories (see further definition of this sample given in Chapter 4).

1. Farming.

42 All land belongs, in theory, to the Shehu and is distributed by Lowans through the authority given them by the Shehu. A man living in the town of Geidam has a right to land surrounding the town, should he wish to make a farm. Such land becomes his in the sense that no one else can farm there, and it is inherited
[651] by his children like other forms of property. Any man who pays the property tax (haraji) in Geidam has a right to land. A newcomer to the town who desires land to farm asks a Lowan for a
[311] plot of land. Since all farm land up to two miles from the edge of the town is farmed by those previously settled in the town, land given to newcomers is uncleared brush far from the town it-
[662] self. However, by paying a sum to the Lowan, a man may be assigned land which is much closer and therefore more desirable. Unused sites become available when people leave Geidam.

House sites come under the same provisions as farm land. If a man wishes to build a house in Geidam he must first ask the permission of the Lowan in whose ward he seeks to build his house. If he wishes to build on unoccupied land he must pay a
[435] sum to the Lowan. The sum may vary from three to ten shillings, depending on the man's means. A man can sell a house which he

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southern Nigerians. The comparatively high frequency of Rho (cDe) chromosome, characteristic of other African populations south of the Sahara, is also present among the Kanuri.(1)

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The Kanuri are sedentary agriculturalists and live in various sized settlements scattered homogeneously throughout the Emirate. In their language they distinguish three kinds of settlements primarily on the basis of size. The largest category, birni (city) refers to centers of population containing 12,000 to 15,000 and over. Besides Maiguguri, the capital, there are only two or three other centers of such large proportion. Villages (bàlà) form the most numerous category and vary in population from a few hundred to about ten thousand. The last category, hamlets (bàlàdèn), contain from fifteen to twenty up to several hundred. For political purposes and the gathering of national census data hamlets are lumped in with villages and called village areas. This makes it difficult to tell from census data what proportion of the population of these village areas live in the village itself as compared with the number living in the surrounding hamlets within the boundaries of the village area. Village area tax rolls from one district (Nagumeri) indicate that about one-half the population listed for any village area actually live in hamlets around the village included in its jurisdictional area.

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At first sight the Bornu countryside appears to be quite thickly populated. When travelling through the bush on horseback or truck, settlements and their encircling farms follow one another after intervals of bushland with unending regularity. This first impression is misleading however for most of the area is uncultivated, unpopulated bushland and the population density is only forty to sixty per square mile. This conclusion

(1) Chalmers J.N.M. and others; THE ABO, MNS and Rh Blood Groups of the Nigerians, Eugenics (London) 17, 3, 168-176, 1953.

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• 311 is also supported by estimates made by officials of the Bornu agricultural department whose records indicate that only seven per cent of the total Emirate land area is under cultivation while another eight to nine per cent is resting land. Since the agricultural potential of the area is relatively homogeneous this means that there is no land pressure and no problem of over-population.

631 Bornu Emirate is a political unit, among others, within Bornu Province and the latter is in turn one of the provinces making up the Northern Region, the largest of the three regions, of Nigeria. The Emirate is under the nominal rule of the Shehu of Bornu and his council, with this latter body under the executive direction of the Wazir of Bornu. These leaders all reside at the Emirate capital, Maiduguri, which is also the capital of Bornu Province. The entire area of the Emirate is divided into twenty-one districts each under a District Head who resides in the district capital. In its turn, each district is sub-divided into village areas under the headship of a Lawan (village area head). Finally under the Lawan are the wards of his village and the hamlets surrounding his village within the village area boundaries. These wards and hamlets are headed by men called Bèlama.

648 The colonial government cuts across this semi-traditional structure. Its center is at Kaduna, the capital of the Northern Region of Nigeria, and its representatives reside throughout the region, with their headquarters at each provincial capital. The Resident Officer of Bornu Province is the senior colonial official in the province and is responsible to Kaduna for the administration of several Emirates and divisions of the province of which Bornu Emirate is only one, albeit the largest. Government departments of education, forestry, agriculture, and the like are responsible for their programs throughout the entire province and work through local native authority departments in each Emirate.

4: Cohen E-5 (1956-1957) 1961
MS14 Kanuri MS14

121 work. This means that minute details of innovation and social life in general can be recorded at the level of the "common man" as contrasted with the analysis of regional or national productivity figures, or of government policies, or United Nations statistics. What emerges is not, therefore, a total picture of the development process, but rather a grass roots view of the reaction to planned culture change by the people at whom the programme was aimed in the first place.

The purpose of this article is to document and analyse an innovation that succeeded technically, and yet failed because the human components of the innovation experience were not taken into account.

101 The place is Africa, the time is 1956-57. But it could very well be the Near East, Asia or South America, anytime between 1940 and 1960. The people are the Kanuri of Bornu Province, Northern Nigeria, but they could be peasants anywhere.

The Context

174 The Kanuri of Bornu province in northeastern Nigeria have
175 been organized as a Muslim emirate in the Chad basin for
[131] many centuries. Their language classification by Greenberg
[642] (1954), early Arabic sources, and the scattered work of a few interested scholars, supports the notion of their continuity in the region, with possible origins somewhere to the northeast of
[177] their present habitat. The pre-colonial emirate kept up continual trade and cultural contacts with the Maghreb during its long history as an organized state.

161 The Kanuri number about one and a half million. The
•311 population density is approximately sixty per square mile and there is no pressure on farmland, which can be extended simply by clearing new bush areas further away from the population
433 settlements. The majority of the people are peasants who carry
241 on three analytically separable economic activities. These consist
44 of (1) farming, primarily millet and guinea corn, supplemented by maize, beans, squashes, cucumbers, and groundnuts, (2) cash
[434] cropping, mostly groundnuts, and (3) a dry season non-farming activity connected with the market. Market activities are in